

THE MENTOR · DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT
DECEMBER 1, 1917



THE CAPITOL

The Capitol faces east and stands on a plateau 88 feet above the level of the Potomac. The cornerstone of the original building was laid on September 18, 1793, by President Washington. On August 24, 1814, the interior of both wings was destroyed by fire, set by the British. The damage to the building was immediately repaired. The original building was finally completed in 1827. Its cost was \$2,433,844.13. The value of the Capitol building and grounds is now about \$26,000,000. The entire length of the building from north to south is 751 feet 4 inches; and its greatest dimension from east to west is 350 feet. The dome is of cast iron, was completed in 1865, and weighs 8,909,200 pounds. The bronze statue of Liberty which crowns the dome is 19 feet 6 inches high, and weighs 12,985 pounds. It was modeled by Crawford. The Capitol houses the Senate Chamber, the Hall of Representatives, and the Supreme Court

THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

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MENTOR GRAVURES

TREASURY BUILDING · STATE, WAR AND NAVY BUILDING · POSTOFFICE DEPARTMENT
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE · BUREAU OF STANDARDS · SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION



"HOW are the American people governed?" What sort of question is that? Does not every American understand that in this free country everybody is a governor and none own to being governed? Do the people not govern themselves? Is it not a people's government, the splendid boast of which is that every citizen of the Republic is a participant? Did not old Josiah Quincy boast that his "friend Copley went to England and became a lord because lords are the product of England, while I remained in America and became a sovereign, because sovereigns are the product of the United States"?

Yet governed we are. Not simply by ourselves and our neighbors and freemen of our own state, by upholders of the great principles of personal liberty, but by speakers of forty different languages, if only they are born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the

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jurisdiction thereof,—all acting through a complicated machinery of government.

Where Is Government?

In ordinary times city and state governments come nearest to us, and most impress us with the authority delegated by the citizens of the Republic to certain elected or appointed individuals who hold the scepter for the time being. Nevertheless, particularly in times of war, we always feel the strength and majesty of the national government, which (in all affairs international) is our father and mother, and stands between us and national danger. Where is this vast government to be found? Wherever there is a letter-carrier in gray or a mail clerk or a rural free deliverer, or a regional bank or a post-office building, needed or otherwise. Wherever the khaki uniform is worn, wherever the Stars and Stripes float from building, or flagstaff or ship. Most of all in the capital city of Washington, named for a soldier-President, studded with magnificent buildings, the central brain of the body politic. Let us then alight at the handsome terminal station of Washington, the entrance hall to the seat of government.

Congress

A few hundred feet from the platform rises one of the most majestic domes ever erected by the hand of man. A white, airy, floating vision of national architecture, yet solid enough when you enter the Capitol, and

realize that you are in the midst of the home of Congress. In the building, the dome of which is surmounted by Miss Liberty in her Indian garb, reside the two houses of Congress. First, let us seek the Senate Chamber. In that hall dedicated to the sittings of the august body may be found from ninety-six to half a dozen members, according to convenience and the importance of the pending business. By the common consent of mankind our Senate, which directly springs



THE WHITE HOUSE

The Executive Mansion and the home of the President. This was the first public building to be erected in Washington, and President Washington was present at the laying of the cornerstone in 1792. John Adams was the first President to live in the building (1800). The architect was James Hoban, and its cost up to now exceeds \$1,500,000. In 1814 the British set fire to the building; but it was repaired and painted white to cover the ravages of the fire. In this manner it received its name



THE EXECUTIVE OFFICES—adjoining the White House

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from and represents the states, is a triumph of political wisdom. It has made federal government possible, not only in the United States but in our admiring imitators, Switzerland, Canada, and Australia and South Africa. It is a body small enough for rational debate, large enough for full council, and the term of six years is sufficient to give a member opportunity to learn the ways and show his talents.

The Senate is a legislative body, in every respect equally powerful with the House of Representatives, and, in two particulars, its superior. The Senate, by a majority vote, confirms nominations to several thousand offices, or if it is cross, or disappointed, or highly patriotic (as the case may be) declines to confirm. The Senate has further the function, which is destined to be even more significant, of passing upon the treaties of the United States with other nations. Many a promising treaty has hopelessly run aground on the shoals of the necessary two-thirds vote. Many great agreements have been ratified and become a part of the law of the land.

A dignified lot are these Senators,—former governors, promoted members from the lower House, able lawyers, and, notwithstanding the comparatively new system of choice by popular vote, numerous captains of industry and finance. The Senate talks easily and occasionally is eloquent. Contrary to general belief, it is much affected by public sentiment as it reveals itself to the mind of the thoughtful Senator, who quickly learns to distinguish between the prejudiced columns of the metropolitan daily, the batches of inspired telegrams, the leading articles in country newspapers, and the practical heart-to-heart talks and letters of political friends who know the state of the country.



THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

In the Executive Building adjoining the White House

papers, and the practical heart-to-heart talks and letters of political friends who know the state of the country.

At the other end of the Capitol sits the House of Representatives, a livelier, more democratic body, which has been allowed slowly to increase to 435, and encamps in a hall so big that a member must speak forcibly to reach the ears of the whole House. The two-year term makes the Congressman less likely to stay a long time; but in the House, as in the Senate, if a man has the capacity to be reelected times enough, he will gradually grow distinguished on the same principle as the centenarian—simply because he has outlived his rivals. For, in the House as in the Senate, a man is estimated not alone by his powers of speech and the loftiness of his mind, but by his place on committees; and as members above him on the list drop out, he advances; so that a very ordinary kind of member may come at last to be chairman of the powerful House Committee

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of Ways and Means, or of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, with its immense influence on world affairs.

A difficulty with the House is that it is too big and too diversified to act together. In ordinary times it is divided sharply between two parties, but the majority party have at least 218 votes, and there are too many leaders in that number to allow of real leadership. From Henry Clay to Tom Reed,—that is, for about eighty years,—the House was usually shaped by its

Speaker; but when in 1910 Joe Cannon was unhorsed from his dictatorship, that office became to a large degree ornamental. In ordinary times the House is practically managed by a steering committee of the majority party, acting in a loose sort of understanding with a similar committee of the Senate, and subject to electric shocks from the President. The two Houses together are the "United States in Congress assembled," charged with the great function of making laws for over a hundred million people. Since both Houses must exactly agree in the text of statutes, down to the insertion of a comma, there is plenty of opportunity for differences that are hard to

adjust. Most important bills are finally settled in their text by conference committees, which occasionally insert in their report provisions to which neither House has previously agreed. In all legislation Congress must take account of the veto power of the President, which gives him in practice a direct power equal to that of fifteen senators and seventy-two members of the House. He exercises an even greater indirect influence, which causes Congress frequently to hold up or alter a bill, through the convic-



THE SENATE CHAMBER

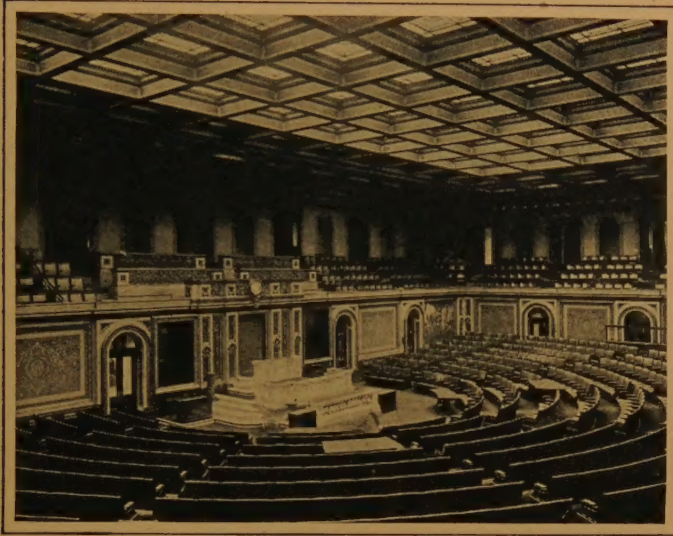
It is 113 feet long, 80 feet wide, and 36 feet high, including the galleries, which extend all around and will accommodate 1,000 persons. Each desk bears a silver plate with the occupant's name. Lots are drawn for a choice of seats—the Republicans sitting at the left and the Democrats at the right of the presiding officer. The chair of the Vice-President of the United States, who is President of the Senate, is a magnificent piece of carved mahogany, a gift to Vice-President Hobart. Busts of all the Vice-Presidents are being placed in niches in the walls



THE SENATE OFFICE BUILDING

Opposite this is a similar office building for the Congressmen

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THE HALL OF REPRESENTATIVES

It is 139 feet long, 93 feet wide and 36 feet high. The "floor" is 115 by 67 feet. 1,200 persons may be accommodated in the galleries. The press gallery is above the desk of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and within call is the sergeant-at-arms, whose symbol of authority is the mace, a bundle of black rods fastened with bands of silver, surmounted by a silver globe, on which is a silver eagle. When the House is in session, the mace is placed on its pedestal; when it rests on the floor, the House is in committee of the whole

tion that otherwise the President will use his veto. Congress has a life and vigor of its own which makes it wonderfully attractive to many of the members of both Houses. Did you notice that old fellow in the frock coat of half a century ago, hanging about the lobbies and cloakrooms? He was a dashing member of the House in his time, and then an eloquent Senator; and he cannot quite persuade himself that he has long since ceased to be a power in legislative halls.

In the Capitol is a room where the President of the United States at times deposits himself so as to sign bills of Congress in the last hurried frantic hours of a session. President Wilson, in the last four years, has frequently come to that room on his way to address one or the other of the Houses, or both sitting jointly; for he has rediscovered the power that comes from closest contact with Congress, and from an appeal through Congress to the constituents throughout the country. The home, the habitat, the signal tower of the President, is, however, the White House,—a building renowned for its proportions, and for more than a century remarkable for its elaborate inconvenience as a home for a family. Now the offices of business have been separated and placed in the depressed west wing, and the main building is left a stately residence, through which walk memories of Jefferson and Jackson and Lincoln and Cleveland and Roosevelt.

The President

The office of the President has in our times expanded beyond the compass of ordinary men. More than one respectable and able President has paid the penalty



BUREAU OF STANDARDS—Administration Building

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of weakness. The direct powers of the executive are enormous, and the war has more than doubled them in a single half year. He appoints, with the confirmation of the Senate, individuals to five thousand offices, including the ten heads of departments; through them and through other executive organizations, he gives direction to the vast executive machinery of the nation. He appoints the persons who appoint or designate all the other civil servants of the Republic; he decides on the policy of the administration; he has the power of pardon for all offenses against the federal law; he may, and not infrequently does, call on militia or troops to protect by force the laws and the officials of the United States from violence.

At present the President's greatest power is over foreign relations. It is his to direct, and often with his own hand to write, the correspondence with foreign governments. He decides upon the external policy of the government, up to the very verge of war. He also appoints, with the consent of the Senate, every commissioned officer of the United States

Army, Navy, and Marine service. More than that, as commander-in-chief of the forces of the United States, he directs in person or through his subordinates the whole conduct of the war; selects the fields of naval and military action; designates and transfers command; takes responsibility for the movements of troops and ships. With the single exception of the German Emperor, not a prince, power, or potentate in the world has such tremendous influence over the affairs of his nation and of mankind.



SUPREME COURT CHAMBER

In the Capitol. On the dais stands the "bench"—nine chairs—of the most august court of the United States. The Justices sit in order of seniority. In the center is the Chief Justice; upon his right hand is the Associate Justice longest in service, and beyond him the second, third and fourth; and then, upon the left of the Chief Justice, the fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth, or youngest in rank of appointment



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The Library was established in 1800, destroyed in 1814 by the burning of the Capitol, and afterward replenished. The present building, opened to the public in November, 1897, cost \$6,347,000; the land, \$585,000. It is the largest and most magnificent library building in the world

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The President's Home

As you enter the White House there is little evidence of all this enormous power. No royal guards in white uniforms and brass helmets protect the head of the nation. He lives like a republican gentleman, with simple equipages and table service. To be sure he is always surrounded with a little cloud of Secret Service men, the necessity for whom has been made evident by the assassination of three Presidents in a little over half a century. Some Presidents have received visitors by the hundreds daily; some, a small number; all depend on the members of their Cabinet and their special political friends in both Houses to keep them informed.



INTERSTATE COMMERCE BUILDING



INTERIOR OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The collection in this library is the largest on the Western Hemisphere and the third in the world. It comprises, among other things, nearly 4,000,000 printed books

A wise President avoids any display of personal power. Yet, in addition to their great executive duties, the three Presidents since 1901 have all felt it a duty to take the vacant place of leader of Congress, by coming forward as the proponents of legislation. Most of the trust, railroad, and public benefit laws of that period have been thought out in the White House and then brought to the attention of Congress. Many of them

have been pushed through by the unyielding drive of the President. All the world knows that the Mann-Elkins Trust Act, under Roosevelt, the stiffening of the railroad acts under Taft, and the Federal Reserve, Tariff and many other measures under Wilson, have become laws against the will of one or both Houses of Congress. They could not stand the pressure when the President appealed over the heads of Congressmen to their constituents. By this process, also, most of the measures for social betterment have finally been brought into a form where they were accepted by Congress and at the same time satisfied the country. In peace or in war, the President of the United States is the main motive power of the Government.

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Supreme Court

Over in the Capitol, in the room once occupied by the Senate and made forever famous by the great debates of the Webster period, sits a body of nine men who in some respects are more powerful than Congress or the President. It is the Supreme Court of the United States, which nominally is created in order to hear and adjust difficulties between individuals arising under the Federal Constitution, laws and treaties.

This function, at its narrowest, has immense possibilities, for the Court deals with the constitutional rights of scores of millions of persons and with property values of thousands of millions. In addition, under the American system of government, the Court has power to decide whether acts of executive and legislative departments fall outside of their authority as defined by the Constitution, and hence are legally no acts at all, and may be disregarded by the Court in making its decisions. This power, commonly called "declaring acts void because not in accordance with the Constitution," has been used of late years to set aside an



PENSION BUREAU

This building, which cost \$902,569.48, is said to be fireproof—a statement which caused General Sheridan to exclaim, "What a pity!" About 1,000,000 beneficiaries are carried on the rolls of the bureau, and the annual outlay is about \$145,000,000



BUREAU OF FISHERIES

This building was formerly an arsenal. Now it contains various aquaria filled with plants and inhabited by fishes, rare and common, and other quaint and interesting things that dwell in rivers and sea. On the upper floor are the offices of the Fish Commissioner and his assistants



GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

Separate and distinct from the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. The officer in charge is known as the Public Printer

income tax, and to hold the acts of great government commissions, like the Interstate Commerce Commission, to be beyond their powers and therefore likewise void. Such tremendous authority, against which few protest, gives to the body of nine learned gentlemen the right to an apparent supremacy over the co-equal departments of government, yet has been but little abused.

Constructive Legislation

As you pass to and fro through Washington, the vistas are interrupted

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by great buildings occupied by the executive departments—State, War, Navy, Interior, and others. These are the office buildings, the clerical centers of the great functions of the Federal Government. In ordinary times that Government has been paying out a billion dollars a year, which will be increased five or six or ten times over by the necessary war expenditures. For many years the Government was contented to keep up the modest war and navy establishments, the Patent Office, the Post-office, the Treasury, and other essential parts of the government machinery. After the Civil War the pension system turned public attention in a new direction, that of aiding those who appealed to the beneficence of the Federal Government. Ever since 1862 Congress has given land and money to agricultural colleges throughout the Union. In the last twenty years it has created a Forest Service, has spent millions in teaching people proper methods of agriculture, has developed protection for miners, has passed acts for the benefit of laborers on govern-



COAST AND GEODETIC SURVEY

This scientific branch of the Department of Commerce maps the coast, charts the waters, and investigates and publishes movements of tides and currents and so on, for the benefit of navigation



UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

ment works and railroad employees engaged in interstate transportation, and has recently added a Child Labor Act. Congress has also created several great commissions, which are partly legislative, partly executive, and partly judicial,—the Interstate Commerce Commission, the Trade Commission, the Federal Reserve Banking Commission, the Tariff Commission, and others. That is, Congress and the whole government have recognized the duty of the United States not simply to protect the nation from invasion and to keep up the departments of government, but to go out and look for constructive methods of bettering the condition of the uneducated, the poor, the defective, and the workingmen and work-



UNITED STATES NATIONAL MUSEUM

This is the depository of the national collections. The main building, devoted to natural history and including the National Gallery of Art, is a new structure that cost \$3,500,000

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ing-women. At the same time there has been provided an elaborate machinery for keeping in check the powerful corporations.

Council of National Defense

The tremendous import of the Government of the United States is revealed just now in a new organization for the war, of which the nerve center is the Council of National Defense. This body is made up of the heads of six of the main departments which have closest relation to war and finance, the sinews of war. Appointed by and acting under direction of this council of six is a monster organization including an Air-craft Production Board, a General Munitions Board, a Committee on Shipping, a Committee on Woman's Defense Work, a Committee on Railroad Transportation, a Committee on Labor, and about forty other committees and subcommittees, including a Committee on Public Information which makes it its duty to inform and arouse public opinion. All this prodigious accumulation of energy is in the last resort responsible to the President.

Thus what starts at Washington is communicated to every part of the

National Government, and also to the great private organizations, commercial, social and fraternal. The purpose of our Government is not simply to secure obedience to national law, but to stir up every citizen of the United States,—man, woman and child,—to the necessity of using every effort and straining every nerve, to preserve this great Government intact, and to hand its blessings down to posterity.



NAVAL OBSERVATORY

Situated north of Georgetown, near Washington. This is the astronomical station of the Government under control of the Navy, and presided over by an officer of high rank, whose main object is the gathering and disseminating of information of use to mariners



PAN-AMERICAN UNION

Maintained by the 21 Republics, in North, Central and South America for the purpose of developing mutual interests and friendly intercourse. The buildings and grounds represent an expenditure of \$1,000,000



BUREAU OF ENGRAVING AND PRINTING

This building is 505½ feet by 295½ feet, and it cost together with the site \$2,869,000. Here are designed, engraved, printed and finished all of the securities and similar work of the Government, including United States notes (paper money), bonds, stamps, commissions, and so on

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Uncle Sam's Payroll

Nobody in the United States knows more about the employees of the Government than Mr. Herbert Brown, chief of the Bureau of Efficiency, an office which exercises general oversight over matters relating to the personnel of all the Departments. Hence, when we could not locate information about the Government payroll in any reference book, we applied to Mr. Brown, and learned from him that complete figures on this subject have never been compiled.

"At the request of Congress," said Mr. Brown, "we recently made a rough estimate, and you will not be far wrong if you state that, just before the United States entered the war, the total salaries and wages of civilian employees amounted to very nearly four hundred million dollars a year. Of course this amount has been greatly increased under stress of war conditions."

Every two years the Government publishes a huge directory of its civil employees, called "The Official Register of the United States." According to the issue of 1915, the last published in peace times, the total number of such employees was 488,711, of whom 42,064 were employed in the city of Washington. In the postal service alone there were 297,531 employees.

These figures do not include the Army and Navy, the total strength of which in the middle of the year 1916 was 174,129, and the total payroll \$105,863,036 per annum. Thus it appears that altogether, shortly before the war, Uncle Sam gave employment to upwards of 660,000 people, and paid them more than five hundred million dollars a year.

The best-paid servant of the Government is, of course, the President, who draws a salary of \$75,000 a year, besides \$25,000 for traveling expenses and a house to live in. Nobody else in this country works as hard as he does for this modest stipend.

The Vice President receives \$12,000 a year; Cabinet officers, \$12,000; the Chief Justice, \$15,000; Associate Justices of the Supreme Court, \$14,500; the Senators and Representatives, \$7,500; the Governor General of the Philippines, \$18,000; Ambassadors to the leading countries, \$17,500. When Dewey was Admiral of the Navy he drew a salary of \$13,500, but at present the best-paid generals and admirals receive \$10,000 per annum.

—The Editor.



PLAN OF THE NEW BUILDING FOR THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

SUPPLEMENTARY READING

THE AMERICAN COMMONWEALTH

Two Volumes

By James Bryce

The great standard work on the subject.

THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

Illustrated

By Frederic J. Haskin

A clear, simple and popular treatment of the subject.

CYCLOPEDIA OF AMERICAN GOVERNMENT By A. C. McLaughlin and Prof. Albert Bushnell Hart

Three Volumes

* * * Information concerning these books may be had on application to the Editor of The Mentor.

THE OPEN LETTER

We were asked some time ago how we could cover the United States in a single number of *The Mentor*? We don't attempt to *cover* it. The *Mentor* does things in its own special way. The History of the United States, the Great Men that have shaped its destiny, the Natural Wonders and Resources of the country, the great Highways and the Commercial and Economic Life of the Republic—all these and other American subjects have been, are being, or will be, treated in turn in special numbers of *The Mentor*. This number is concerned with just one thing—how the Government is conducted.

In this Open Letter I want to consider an inspiring phase of the subject that has been suggested to me by Professor Hart. Just what is meant by the title "United States of America"? What is its national significance, and what does it imply as far as the other nations of the world are concerned?

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When Congress, in July 1776, headed a certain immortal document as follows: "The Unanimous Declaration of the Thirteen United States of America," none of those who framed the words realized how far their sound was to go, nor the might and majesty which the great Republic would attain when, instead of thirteen, there should be forty-eight United States of America. The words "United" and "States" have both a historical and political significance. "United" harks back to the "United Colonies of New England," which in 1643 drew up the first Federal Constitution in America; and the framers of that instrument were thinking of the Union of Utrecht, formed by the "United Provinces of the Netherlands," in 1579. Thus there is a chain of connection through these documents all the way to the Federal Constitution of 1787. The word "United" is the root stock of many of our finest phrases: "United we stand, divided we fall"; "In union there is strength"; "Liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable." It is the key-word of that Federal idea, which is one of the greatest contributions made to mankind by the people of the North American Republic.

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"States" is another significant word. When it was first used, people were thinking of a State as an organized, independent community. France was a State, Great Britain was a State. Massachusetts and South Carolina also liked the comfortable self-governing term "State," as against their old name of "Colony." State meant the right to make laws and constitutions according to the will of the people. Yet the moment the word "State" was used as a

part of the title of the new government and of the people who were carrying on the Revolution, the idea of the independence and sovereignty of each of the thirteen separate communities was given up. As Abraham Lincoln put it in 1861, "The Union is older than the State; the Union made the States and not the States the Union." Not one of the new "States" was able to defend itself without the aid of its neighbors. Not one framed a Constitution without the good-will of Congress, which represented them all. The thirteen States were born equal sisters, and thirty-five others have been admitted to the blessings of the Union on the same footing, in what Chief Justice Chase called: "An indestructible Union of indestructible States."

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For many years the attention of the United States was fixed upon itself—opening up its territory, increasing its population, developing its resources, improving its social and political institutions. Inasmuch as the country produces the necessities of life in great abundance as well as materials for manufacturers of textiles, wood and metal, it has felt little dependence upon other parts of the world.

But this "policy of isolation" has been giving way ever since the Civil War. The United States could not refrain from a special interest in its Latin-American neighbors, which has given rise to a new form of the Monroe Doctrine. The improvement of steamship travel and telegraphic communication has brought Europe and Asia much nearer in trade and commerce. The immigrants have broken down the barriers between the American born and the foreign born. In the Spanish War of 1898 the United States came out from behind its breastworks, and reached eastward and westward for territory. The possession of the Philippines made the United States an Asiatic power. Porto Rico gave it a footing in the Caribbean Sea. Since the Spanish War it has brought under its protection, substantially as dependencies, the five nominally independent nations of Cuba, Panama, Santa Domingo, Nicaragua and Hayti. Notions of trade have also changed because the United States is now selling enormous amounts of, manufactured goods to foreign countries.

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The people of the United States have, therefore, reached out in thought far beyond the boundaries of the forty-eight States. American troops joined with Europeans in marching up to Peking in 1900. The annexation of Hawaii has made the Nation a mid-Pacific power. It is acquiring a great influence in Central America, and it is concerned with Mexico. Americans have been thinking in larger terms, have foreseen a broader future, expect a wider American influence. The United States of America has now a footing and an interest in other quarters of the earth

W. S. Ufford

